

EPA Climate Change and Water News

December 12, 2013

EPA Climate Change and Water News is a bi-weekly newsletter from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Water that features news and information about EPA and other federal agencies related to climate change and water. Partner activities, as well as related events and publications, are also included.

To learn more about climate change impacts on water resources, visit our website at: <http://www.epa.gov/water/climatechange>. For training, conferences, webinars, and other events, visit: <http://water.epa.gov/scitech/climatechange/Calendar-of-Events.cfm>.

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U.S. EPA News

EPA Hosts New England Climate Change Leaders Summit

On November 8, 2013, EPA Region 1 convened an invitational "Preparing for Climate Change Leaders Summit" in Providence, Rhode Island. 140 leaders from federal, tribal, state, and local government, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, and businesses came together to discuss what they

can do to help local communities be more resilient to climate change impacts. The summit opened with a panel of municipal officials who discussed barriers, gaps, and opportunities in their experience with resiliency planning. The panel included Michael Murphy from Groton, Connecticut, who was involved in a local adaptation planning exercise funded by EPA's Climate Ready Estuaries Program through the Long Island Sound Study. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse of Rhode Island gave the keynote address, focusing on impacts of climate change already being measured in New England and his efforts in Congress. The summit culminated with commitments by participants to address six themes - pilot vulnerability assessments; state roundtables with federal partners to coordinate assessment resource; integrating climate planning into all municipal planning; developing a common data platform in New England; communication initiatives to make climate impacts and solutions local and personal; and scoping out smarter spending on resilient infrastructure. A summit report will be available in January 2014. For more information, contact Mel Cote at cote.mel@epa.gov.

EPA's Climate Ready Estuaries Program, the State of Connecticut, and ICLEI Release Adaptation Resource Toolkit

The Connecticut Adaptation Resource Toolkit (CART) was developed by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) and ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability USA (ICLEI) with funding from the EPA Climate Ready Estuaries Program through the Long Island Sound Study. CART was developed to help local government staff have instant access to climate change adaptation resources. CART is a one-stop shopping website for ideas and methods on local climate change adaptation planning and action. The need for CART was identified through a prior EPA-funded CT DEEP and ICLEI collaborative project that involved working with Groton, Connecticut on a model adaptation planning process. The project focused on identifying the needs and appropriate policies for each level of government as well as on helping the town conduct a preliminary vulnerability assessment. The administration in Groton has formally included adaptation criteria in the review and funding of capital improvements and has recently commenced development of a database as the basis for its infrastructure vulnerability assessment efforts. To access CART and for more information, visit: http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=4423&q=531864&deepNav_GID=2121.

EPA and Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Release Guide: "Using Smart Growth Strategies to Create More Resilient Communities in the Washington, D.C., Region"

A guide from EPA's Smart Growth Program and Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments gives local governments in the metropolitan Washington D.C. area policy options to consider when preparing for climate risks while also meeting other environmental, economic, and social goals. While the guide was developed for the D.C. region, it will likely be helpful for other areas of the country as well. It presents approaches that can be used in city, suburban, or rural settings. The guide describes smart growth approaches that can reduce climate change-related risks to the land use, transportation, water, and building sectors. These approaches focus on three major goals: discouraging new development in particularly vulnerable areas, protecting people and assets in vulnerable areas, and encouraging sustainable growth in appropriate, less vulnerable areas. To access the report, visit: http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/sgia_communities.htm#dc.

Other Federal Agency News

Draft of Third National Climate Assessment (NCA) Report Submitted for Government Review

The National Climate Assessment and Development Advisory Committee (NCADAC) met on November 18th to review the NCA timeline and provide the NCADAC Executive Secretariat with the authority to deliver the draft Third National Climate Assessment for government review. On November 22nd, the draft was submitted. Over the next few months, reviewers will confirm that the document meets the standards set by the Information Quality Act and the requirements of the Global Change Research Act. Any

requests to change the content of the document will be returned to the NCADAC and report authors and - if necessary - new language will be negotiated. The report is on track to be released in April 2014; it will be available both as a PDF and as an interactive website via the Global Change Information System. For more information on the National Climate Assessment, visit: <http://www.globalchange.gov/what-we-do/assessment>.

Other News

California Natural Resources Agency Releases Public Review Draft of Document on Reducing Climate Risk in California

The California Natural Resources Agency, in coordination with other state agencies, is updating its 2009 California Climate Adaptation Strategy. The draft "Safeguarding California: Reducing Climate Risk" Plan augments previously identified strategies in light of advances in climate science and risk management options. Comments on the draft plan are being accepted through February 28, 2013. More information about public workshops and how to submit comments can be found at: http://resources.ca.gov/climate_adaptation/.

Report Released on California's Water-Energy-Climate Nexus

The Climate Registry and Water Energy Innovations, Inc. have released "California's Water-Energy-Climate Nexus: Energy and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Embedded in Water," which proposes a framework for measuring and addressing the energy use and greenhouse gases (GHGs) associated with California's water and wastewater systems. The California Energy Commission established that California water agencies use substantial quantities of energy to provide high-quality water to consumers: nearly twenty percent of California's electricity and more than thirty percent of non-power plant natural gas is used for water-related purposes. While the energy and associated GHGs embedded in our water and wastewater systems contribute to climate change, these same systems are also particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts. Water agencies could experience higher infrastructure and energy costs and be required to invest in new water resources; consumers could face lower water quality and higher costs. The proposals in the paper include the development of GHG accounting guidance specifically for water agencies that addresses the entire water use cycle, from procurement to treatment and discharge. To access the report, visit: <http://www.theclimateregistry.org/downloads/2013/10/California-Water-Energy-Climate-Nexus.pdf>.

Special Issue of Journal "Climatic Change" Focuses on Climate Change and Indigenous Communities

The impacts of climate change on natural and cultural tribal resources are the focus of a newly released special issue of the journal "Climatic Change" (Vol. 20, Issue 3). Released online on September 15, this is the first time a peer-reviewed scientific journal has devoted an entire edition to the impacts of climate change on indigenous communities across the U.S. The special issue was a collaborative effort by over 50 authors representing tribal communities, academia, government agencies, and NGOs. The research presented in the issue supplements the "Impacts of Climate Change on Tribal, Indigenous, and Native Lands and Resources" chapter of the Third National Climate Assessment. For more information, visit: <http://link.springer.com/journal/10584/120/3/page/1>.

Columbia University's Center for Climate Change Law Publishes Report on State by State Hazard Mitigation Plans and Climate Change

Climate change is affecting and will continue to affect the frequency and severity of natural hazard events, a trend that is of increasing concern for emergency managers and hazard mitigation agencies across the United States. Proper response to these hazards will require preparation and planning. Unfortunately, states are not required to include analysis of climate change in their State Hazard Mitigation Plans. This leads to uneven treatment of the issue and missed opportunities for mitigation planning. This report identifies those state plans that do address climate change and climate-related

issues in an accurate and helpful manner and those that do not. The results of the survey indicate that coastal states are more likely to include a discussion of climate change, possibly due in part to recent emphasis on and awareness of the relationship between climate change and sea level rise, coastal storms, and related hazards. The relative lack of discussion of climate change in land-locked states may point to a need for greater communication of how risks such as drought, floods, heat events, and non-coastal storms are affected by climate change. To view the report, visit:

http://web.law.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/microsites/climate-change/files/Publications/Students/SHMP%20Survey_Final.pdf.

City of Boston Releases New Report on Municipal Climate Preparedness

Boston's Mayor signed an Executive Order on Climate Action in 2007. The central theme was that consideration of the changing climate must be incorporated into all planning, projects, permitting, and reviews that the city undertakes. Furthermore, Boston's residents, businesses, and institutions must also take appropriate steps to ensure that their homes, families, businesses, and employees are also prepared. With that in mind, the City of Boston has recently released the report, "Climate Ready Boston: Municipal Vulnerability to Climate Change," which identifies ways in which Boston has and will prepare for the impacts of climate change on municipal operations. To access the report, visit:

http://issuu.com/ees_boston/docs/final_report_29oct13.

Coastal Resilience Network Releases New Suite of Interactive Tools

The Coastal Resilience Network recently released Coastal Resilience 2.0, an interactive suite of tools that help users visualize risks to coastal communities and habitats, and help decision makers reduce and mitigate the risks from storms and other hazards like coastal erosion and flooding. This interactive suite of tools allows users to examine storm surge, sea level rise, natural resources, and economic assets. It also allows users to develop risk reduction and restoration solutions. The Coastal Resilience tools cover different regions including: a U.S. national and global application, eight U.S. States (Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, New York, Connecticut, New Jersey), two specific U.S. locations (Puget Sound, WA, and Ventura County, CA), four countries in Latin America (Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras) and three island nations in the Caribbean (Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, U.S. Virgin Islands). For more information, visit: <http://maps.coastalresilience.org/network/>.

Johnson Foundation Releases Report on Building Resilient Utilities

The Johnson Foundation recently convened experts from the energy and water utility sectors to discuss how the two sectors can become more resilient and sustainable. The discussion quickly moved to the "utility of the future" and "customer of the future," focusing on how the traditional silos of electricity, water supply, and wastewater can be integrated. The resulting report explores opportunities, identifies hurdles to cross-sector collaboration, and presents strategies for creating the integrated utilities of the future. To view the report, visit:

http://www.johnsonfdn.org/sites/default/files/reports_publications/CNW_ResilientUtilities.pdf.

Ecological Society of America Journal Releases Issue on Climate Change Impacts on Ecosystems and People

The November 2013 issue of the Ecological Society of America's journal "Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment" is devoted to an assessment of climate change effects on ecosystems and consequences for people. This issue addresses five major topics of concern: biodiversity, ecosystem functionality, ecosystem services, combined effects of climate and other pressures, and preparation for change. To access the November issue, please visit: <http://www.esajournals.org/toc/fron/11/9>. To read the press release, visit: <http://www.esa.org/esa/?p=10058>.

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